

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO AMEMBASSY LISBON

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJECT: LACERDA ATTACKS PORTUGUESE SOCIALIST

REF: LISBON 224

1. PER YOUR INQUIRY REFTEL, THE ARTICLE AUTHORED BY CARLOS LACERDA APPEARED SECTION TEN OF O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO OF JAN. 12. IT WAS A HALF-PAGE ITEM ENTITLED, "OPEN LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE PORTUGUESE REPUBLIC."

2. IT BEGAN BY CRITICIZING THE LISBON PRESS FOR OPPOSING LACERDA'S ENTRANCE INTO PORTUGAL AND PUBLISHING PHOTOS OF HIM WITH SALAZAR. LACERDA NOTED THAT HE WAS THEN ON AN OFFICIAL MISSION FOR THE GOB AND THAT HE HAD ALSO HAD HIS PHOTO TAKEN WITH KENNEDY, THE SHAH OF IRAN, LEOPOLD SENGHOR AND OTHERS. HE CHIDED THE PORTUGUESE PRESS FOR CON-DEMNING HIM FOR MEETING AND EXCHANGING IDEAS WITH SALAZAR WHEN DURING SALAZAR'S REGIME THE SAME PRESS WAS COWED AND AFRAID TO OPPOSE THE EX-STRONGMAN.

3. LACERDA THEN LAUNCHED INTO A CRITICISM OF THE "DANGEROUS POLITICAL DRIFT" OF PORTUGAL. HE CITED

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THE "PREVAILING CLIMATE OF HATE AND RECRIMINATION"

WHICH THE ARMED FORCES ARE ALLOWING TO CONTINUE UNABATED. THE RAMPANT ABUSE OF LIBERTY, HE OBSERVED, THREATENED TO EXCHANGE ONE TYRANNY FOR ANOTHER. THE DEMAGOGUERY OF THE COMMUNIST AND THEIR SYMPATHIZERS COULD MAKE A MOCKERY OF THE SCHEDULED ELECTIONS. MEN LIKE ALVARO CUNHAL "WELL TRAINED IN PRAGUE, IN THE SCHOOL OF INVADERS, ALREADY DECLARE THAT THE ELECTIONS ARE NOT GOING TO BE FREE." LACERDA QUESTIONED WHAT WAS TO BE EXPECTED WHEN A MINISTER MADE SUCH A STATEMENT? THE ARMY THAT ENTHRONED AND THEN DETHRONED SALAZAR AND CAETANO SEEMED ENROUTE TO ENTHRONING THE COMMUNISTS. THE ROAD APPEARED OPEN TO A RESURGENCE OF THE PORTUGUESE ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST TRADITION, THE TRADITION WHICH CAUSED THE FALL OF THE 1ST REPUBLIC AND THE RISE OF THE ESTADO NOVO. WITHOUT ACTION, THE PRESENT REGIME, WITH OR WITHOUT THE ELECTIONS, COULD HOPE TO LAST ONLY AS LONG AS IT TOOK THE COMMUNISTS TO GATHER TOTAL POWER. THE CHOICE WAS A TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY OR THE PREPARATION FOR COMMUNIST DICTATORSHIP. THE BRAZILIAN EX-POLITICO ALLEGED THAT ONLY THE COMMUNISTS HAD DEMONSTRATED THE CAPACITY TO EXERCISE POWER AND COSTA GOMES' ALLIES WERE INCOMPETENT. ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE SOCIALISTS AND THE COMMUNISTS PLAYS RIGHT INTO THE COMMUNIST SCENARIO. MARIO SOARES IS LEARNING, BUT HIS PERPLEXITY IS SIGN OF HIS GOOD FAITH. THE ADHERENCE OF THE SOCIALIST WING OF VITOR CUNHA REGO, LACERDA BELIEVES, IS SIGNIFICANT: "MEN LIKE THIS ARE WELL-ACQUAINTED WITH THE CAUSE." LIBERTY FOR THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE WOULD NOT BE OBTAINED BY HAVING THE "ENEMIES OF LIBERTY" SERVE AS THE GUARANTOR. POLITICALLY DISTORGANIZED MASSES AS WELL AS OTHER SECTORS IN THE SOCIETY WERE NOTED TO BE FALLING INTO THE COMMUNIST ORBIT.

4. LACERDA ARTICLE HAD NO GREAT PUBLIC IMPACT HERE -- HE IS PERSONALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY NON GRATA TO THE REVOLUTIONARY SYSTEM -- AND THE ARTICLE BORE VISIBLE TRACES OF WOUNDED PRIDE, EVEN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SO, LACERDA RETAINS A CENSORSHIP, AND HIS ARTICLE CONTRIBUTES TO AN ATMOSPHERE OF APPREHENSION HERE CONCERNING THE FUTURE COURSE OF A PORTUGAL FALLEN UNDER WHAT APPEARS TO MANY BRAZILIANS TO BE EFFECTIVE LEFTIST INFLUENCE.
CRIMMINS

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